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characterized as an 'upswing' in the development of a revolutionary movement in Europe, as based upon the progressive self-organization of an international working class. This culminated in the foundation of the Second International in 1889. Only a few months later, Paris hosted the 1889 Exposition Universelle, where the two most stunning engineering marvels to date were unveiled: the Eiffel Tower and the Galerie des Machines. Murphy appeals to the authority of Sigfried Giedion, official historian of Corbusian modernism, who asserted early on that 'the exhibition of 1889 is both the climax and ... the conclusion of [the age]'. Conversely, the period beginning in 1971 through to the present must be deemed a 'downswing' in the development of revolutionary social forces at the heart of the capitalist world-system. With neoliberalism rising out of the ashes of Fordist technocracy, the sense of political agency it propped up has all but disintegrated. A watershed can be discerned some time

around 1989 with the break-up of the Soviet Union, but this was merely the *coup de grâce* dealt to the revolutionary dream of the nineteenth century.

This raises a question regarding the character of the failure mentioned in the book's title. What sort of failure does Murphy investigate? Though he insists the issues discussed in the text are 'as much *architectural* issues as any other kind', it is difficult not to feel that there is something more at stake. The book engages in a species of ideology critique. More often than not, the architectural failures attest to deeper political failures that have taken place. *The Architecture of Failure* skilfully manoeuvres over diverse historical terrain without ever losing sight of this central thematic, using architecture as a lens covered by a film of black dust, through which the political regression of recent times may be viewed with melancholic lucidity.

Ross Wolfe

It's easy if you try

Sally Anne Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012. xi + 490 pp., £22.50 pb., £60.00 hb., 978 0 19989 262 4 pb., 978 0 19989 263 1 hb.

What use is so-called 'analytic' philosophy to feminism, anti-racism and the cause of social justice? Haslanger recalls encountering scepticism among some feminist theorists about her deep commitment to the methods of this tradition in philosophy. Haslanger's answer to these critics is the sophistication of her accounts of gender, race and ideology critique and their applicability to the causes of fighting sexism and racism. These accounts find their most extensive treatment in this book, which brings together several of her articles on race and gender previously published elsewhere, with one new chapter and an extensive introduction.

Haslanger is a metaphysical realist who is also a social constructionist about race and gender. In her account, first developed as an explication of Catherine MacKinnon's position, to be a woman is to occupy a social role of systematic subordination. More specifically, the social type 'woman' is the group of all those individuals who (i) have observed or imagined bodily features which are presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction, (ii) are marked within the dominant ideology as individuals who ought to play a given subordinate role, and (iii) are systematically oppressed because they satisfy both

(i) and (ii). It follows that in this account women as a type are subordinated by definition or by the nature of the group.

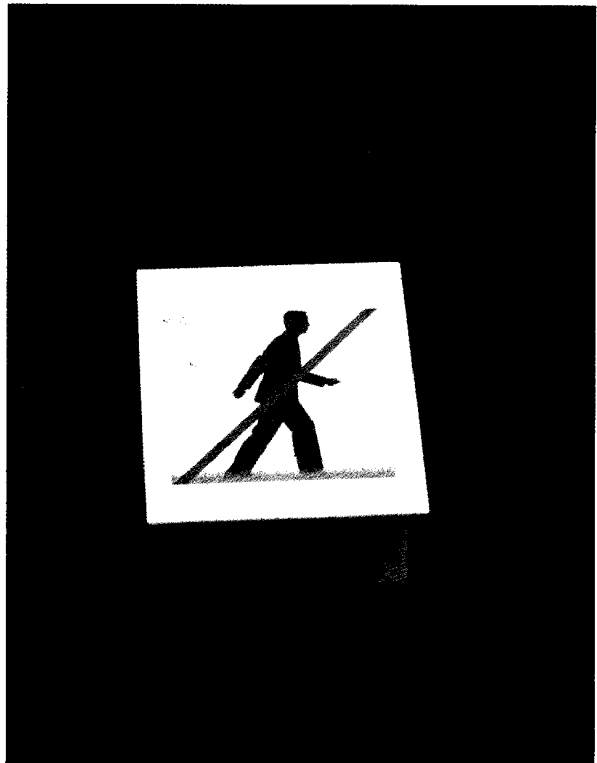
Haslanger embraces this conclusion and argues that we ought to fight for a world where there are no men or women, or races. Her point, of course, is not that there will not be males or females (Haslanger is self-consciously old-fashioned about the distinction between sex and gender). Rather, her claim is that none of these future human beings will occupy our gender roles. There might, however, be successor genders which would not match up with any structure of oppression. She also makes similar claims about 'races' whose elimination needs to be fought for, whilst conceding that there might be space for something like ethnicities or ethno-races in just societies. From these considerations a further conclusion follows: although women and blacks are oppressed by their social nature (so to speak), no one is by nature a woman or a black person. To be a woman or black is to have become one in virtue of occupying a social role of a given kind.

Many of the articles that make up this book are dedicated to exploring several features of these definitions of gender and of race. The first feature of note is that Haslanger's definition of woman, as the occupier

of a higher-level role, neatly accounts for the phenomena of intersectionality and cross-cultural variation. There is, in this view, no one social role that all women occupy independently of culture, race, social class or other features. Instead, these individuals are likely to occupy different social roles. However, these roles themselves are all instances of a broader type of role. This is the role of being subordinated in a systematic fashion because of being bodily marked as suitable for playing a given role in reproduction. Haslanger is deeply aware that her definition of woman may seem counterintuitive. The objection is even more keenly felt with regard to race. She defines a racialized group as comprising all those individuals who (i) have observed or imagined bodily features (which she labels 'colour') that are presumed to be evidence of ancestral links to a certain geographical region, (ii) are marked within the dominant ideology as individuals who ought to play a given subordinate or privileged role, and (iii) are systematically oppressed or privileged because they satisfy both (i) and (ii). It has been remarked by her opponents that this definition does not capture our concept of race. In other words, she has been accused, when she purports to write about gender and race, of changing the subject. Haslanger's response appears to vacillate between two different strategies. In order to appreciate them, more needs to be said about Haslanger's metaphysics.

Haslanger is a metaphysical realist of a sort; her position is akin to promiscuous realism in so far as she adopts a crowded ontology. In her view objective types, groups of things which have a unity because each member of the group possesses the same mind-independent property or properties, proliferate. Genders and races are, counterintuitively, among them. They are also socially constructed in several ways. First, the classification systems of genders and races are themselves socially constituted in so far as these are classifications of social roles. Second, the individuals who occupy these roles are also discursively constructed in so far as many of their characteristic behaviours and habits are to a substantial extent the result of what is attributed to them, and what they have consequently internalized, because of their roles. For instance, individual women are constructed because they have acquired the bodily habits indicative of submissiveness and weakness which are expected of those occupying their roles. Social construction, so understood, does not make individuals or the kinds to which they belong less real.

For Haslanger, it might also not make them less objective. To appreciate the point it is useful to



introduce some terminology adopted by Haslanger herself. She uses the term 'difference' to refer to the basis (if any) in reality of distinctions that we may wish to draw, while she reserves the terms 'distinction' or 'classification' for the linguistic/conceptual act of marking differences. The classification of individuals as men or women is the drawing of a distinction. The types that this distinction draws exist if they have enough unity. Because of the workings of discursive construction, individuals who are classified as belonging to the group become more homogeneous, and thus the groups acquire social reality. So genders and races are real. They are also objective if there is a difference or a set of differences which the classification tracks. Note that these differences might not be the properties those who employ the classification take themselves to be tracking. In this manner, concept users might be mistaken about the differences in reality that their concepts latch on to. With regard to genders and races these differences are social (rather than natural, as many assume). They are objective because they are not mere projections or inventions. They are also mind-independent in a sense: they cannot be wished away. They are mind-dependent in another sense as they have been brought into existence as a result of human activity. But this kind of dependence does not undermine their objective reality.

With these points in mind we can return to Haslanger's responses to the charge of changing the subject. One of her lines of response is that her

approach is ameliorative or analytical. She does not aim to offer an account of the concepts of woman or white that are in common currency. On the contrary she tries to forge new concepts that are superior to current ones for the purpose of understanding social reality with a view to fighting social injustice. In other words, she takes herself to be a kind of social scientist who develops new theoretical concepts that fit reality better than commonsensical ones. Her other line of response relies on Haslanger's commitment to semantic externalism. The latter is the view that the content of our thoughts or beliefs is not fixed exclusively by what is in the head but depends also on the speaker's linguistic community and on her natural and physical environment. A consequence of the view is that competent speakers of a language do not know, by introspection alone, what they are talking about. The classic example in the analytic literature is 'water'. This so-called natural kind term refers to stuff whose chemical composition is H₂O. Speakers ignorant of chemistry still refer to H₂O when they talk about water, although they do not know that *that* is what they are talking about. Haslanger attributes the same semantics to social kinds terms and thus denies that we should rely on our intuitions when we are trying to become clear about what we are talking of in the case of race or gender. These two lines of response are different, albeit not straightforwardly incompatible. When using the first, Haslanger concedes that in one sense she is changing the subject, in so far at least as she is changing the concepts.

Several questions might be raised about the usefulness of the approach. How is the cause of justice helped by claiming that we should fight for a world in which there are no more blacks, or whites or women (as defined by Haslanger)? One might be tempted to say: this is just semantics. And, in a sense, it is just semantics; but it shows that semantics matters a great deal. Haslanger's metaphysical and linguistic frameworks reveal how ideology works to naturalize what are, in reality, socially constructed distinctions. Careful attention to how language works, to how generalizations are made, helps to debunk any misunderstanding of these social types as natural kinds.

These are just some of the issues explored in this extremely rich collection of papers. There are other important running themes, which I cannot discuss here, about adoption and about how to fragment and disrupt identities based on gender and race. Readers who are not familiar with, or sympathetic to, analytic philosophy might become a bit impatient at times with some of the lines of thought pursued here and

perhaps frustrated by some of the background assumptions made. To them I would say: please persevere! There is real insight to be gained from the clarity and carefulness that Haslanger brings to her analyses of these issues.

Alessandra Tanesini

Animal careers

Oxana Timofeeva, *History of Animals: An Essay on Negativity, Immanence and Freedom*, Foreword by Slavoj Žižek, Jan Van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, 2013. 168 pp., £17.00 pb., 978 9 07207 672 4.

Animals have had a 'bad career', as Oxana Timofeeva deadpans. It seems, however, that the worse that career is in reality – as animals go from totem objects to hyper-exploitation and extinction – the better it is in philosophy. Today animals are everywhere: valorized as forms of alterity or becoming that demand respect, admiration and envy. This apparent paradox is one of the tensions that Timofeeva aims to diagnose and explode. Animals, whether well or badly treated, are a problem for philosophy. Deftly tracking between philosophy, psychoanalysis, politics and literature Timofeeva carefully reconstructs the disruptive negativity of the animal in relation to philosophy's attempt to impose an order of things on animality. If animals have a history, then this history may not simply be the history we tell.

The struggle of philosophy with the animal has been to try to place animals either within philosophy or outside it, but either way within a structure, order and hierarchy. Animals are endlessly exploitable material, whether dismissed or celebrated, for philosophy. Primarily, animals are either included in a continuum which ranges from the 'lower' forms to the human as featherless (or furless) biped, such as in Aristotle, or excluded from any relation to the human, as in Descartes. Timofeeva's method is not simply to add to the discourse of blaming philosophers for the mistreatment of animals, however. Instead she aims to probe how this attempt at ordering places philosophy in constant contact with the animal as a point of internal subversion.

The result is a reading method that Timofeeva calls 'naive'. Rather than trying to assert a superior discourse that would grasp the real animal, we can, instead, probe the animal as a disruptive moment of negativity. This challenges two familiar critical reading